

Public Hearing Testimony on House Bill 5653

Speaker: Winston A. Campbell

Bill Position: Opposition

Madam Chair / Mr. Chairman

Thank you for this opportunity to voice my opinion about a proposed House Bill.

I am Winston Campbell and I live in the town of Bloomfield, Connecticut.

I will be presenting my testimony on House Bill 5653 "An Act Establishing An Excise Tax on Ammunition To Provide Funding for Community Gun Violence And Intervention Program Grants".

My testimony is in opposition to this House Bill.

House Bill 5653 seems to be in response to the public being impacted by those who have lost their life or were injured by the misuse of firearms. The revenue to be generated by this bill will be used to foster programs to address firearm violence. This seems like a worthy cause on the surface, it may also act as a subtle form of firearm control.

To attain skillfulness, professional or amateur athletes, musicians, actors, and people in many professions must practice. Practice helps them to attain and maintain their skill.

A firearms owner must also practice. Whether they use a firearm for competitive shooting, hunting or personal defense, practice is very important. House Bill 5653 will make it increasingly difficult to maintain the practice that is needed for a firearms owner; especially for those who own firearms in multiple calibers. If the cost of ammunition becomes prohibitive then this could cause a lawful firearms owner or potential owner to not pursue this activity and thus HB 5653 becomes a firearms control measure.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health publishes an annual Registration Report of Vital Events. This annual report provides information of deaths in Connecticut from all causes. The most recent data from 2021 reported 241 firearm deaths of which 114 were homicides, 121 were suicides and 6 were not categorized.

It is estimated that 23.6% of Connecticut residents own firearms. With a population of about 3.6 million people that would mean about 850,000 Connecticut residents own firearms. Recent reports in the Hartford Courant point out that a small percentage of state residents (repeat offenders) are responsible for up to 85% of gun crimes. HB 5653 would be penalizing hundreds of thousands more people who legally own firearms and use them responsibly and not committing firearm related crimes.

The 2021 Registration Report of Vital Events reported 306 deaths involving motor vehicles. There is no information about how many of these deaths might have been related to DUI offenses. If there was such information, would you impose an excise tax on all residents who purchase an automobile or all residents who purchase alcohol to raise revenue to address DUI intervention? Likely not. This would penalize many more people for an offense they are not committing.

Neither should you be levying an excise tax on ammunition as proposed by House Bill 5653 as you are penalizing many more people who are not at fault for the firearm related violence you are looking to address.